

March 7, 2012

State of Connecticut General Assembly

February Session, 2012

Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Laurie Roberts. I live in the town of Lisbon in southeast Connecticut and I am writing to express my support for Raised Bill # 5389, An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana.

I am college educated and hold degrees in Chemical Engineering and Chemistry with some additional graduate level courses in Business Management. I have worked full time in several disciplines of chemistry until mid 2006 when I had to make the very difficult decision, supported by my husband and doctor, to take leave from work due to an inability to perform my job requirements and duties caused by the worsening Chronic Pain I suffer from and the awful side effects of the prescription medication I need to take. Eventually, I had to apply for my Disability Benefits as I am unable to be functionally employed any longer due to my illnesses and medications.

I have been living with Degenerative Disc Disease, Osteoarthritis and severe chronic muscle spasms since I was in my teenage years. Entering my early 20's these conditions continued, along with the development of severe Chronic Pain, Depression and Anxiety/Panic Disorder. In my late 20's my doctor told me I had the cervical spine of a person in their 70's and there was no treatment available with the exception of anti-inflammatory and pain medication. For a long time I sought out natural methods of treatment such as chiropractic, naturopathic, acupuncture and nutritional supplements, to name a few, but none ever provided any long term relief. I eventually was referred to Pain Management treatment, which I have been a patient now for approximately 13 years. My doctor has prescribed many combinations of medication, but none ever work sufficiently and they all have numerous side effects. When I was 48 years old I had a case of Shingles and since then have also been suffering from Post Herpetic Neuropathy (PHN), which is extremely painful. A few years later I was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis, which is a chronic inflammatory arthritis and autoimmune disease. There is no known cure for this disease, only medication for the treatment of inflammation and pain. Around the same time I was told that my cervical spine was that of a person in their 90's, and again, no treatment or cure is available with the exception of anti-inflammatory and pain medication.

The side effects of the medication I take include nausea, severe constipation, sudden uncontrollable sweating, agitation and mood swings, dizziness, memory problems and sleepiness. There have been a few instances over the years when I have gotten ill with vomiting and was unable to keep my medications down long enough to get in my body

system and I would end up in the hospital because my body would be going through narcotic withdrawal, which is a horrendous experience. I am constantly searching for relief of my Chronic Pain and Depression and came upon research of marijuana being used for a variety of illnesses. I decided to try it to see if it would help me and it did help out quite a bit and I had no detrimental side effects. I would much rather take something natural than the synthetic medications. All the material I have read is positive for the use of marijuana in treating a huge variety of ailments. Additionally, I have a brother with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and through my research on marijuana; I found it might be beneficial for him from its use.

In summary, over the past 30 plus years, I have been prescribed many, many medications for my illnesses, they all have limited effectiveness and all have side effects that take away from the quality of life which I desperately seek. I think it is my right to be able to use the natural medication of marijuana to treat my illnesses, as well as countless other citizens it may be of beneficial use.

Sincere thanks,

Laurie Roberts

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